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AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS ISLAND, BY RICHARD CARLILE, ON HIS PAST PROCEEDINGS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.

London, July 9, 1826.

NEAR eight months have elapsed since I was liberated from Dorchester Gaol, after six years of imprisonment. Though I have not been idle during that time, I have considered myself in a passive state, from the want of a proper establishment wherein to conduct my business. I had much rather have remained in the Gaol for this last eight months, than have been so unpleasantly situated as I have been as to place of business. But the difficulty is at length surmounted, and I present myself to the public in an establishment equal to the convenience and respectable appearance of conducting that important business which I hope to carry on, as the only sure prelude to a redress of the grievances of the people of this Island, and a reformation of that system of political and theological rule by which they are grieved.

Nine years have elapsed since I first made my appearance in Fleet Street as a bookseller. Near seven of that nine have been passed in different Gaols, for the publication of what have been called libels, which mean books and nothing but books, such books as one part of an ill-formed community desires that another part shall not read; such books as are calculated to remove all ignorance of the cause of political grievances; such books as have been the "forbidden fruit," wherever tyranny has acquired power; such books as are allegorized in the Book of Genesis, as the fruit of the tree of knowledge, the eating of which is the only food that will make man superior in character to his fellow animals; such books as form the key to the allegory of "Christ crucified," or the *anointed reason* of man persecuted almost to extinction by the malevolent power of pre-existing, profitable error.

During the year 1816, a period of distress among the mechanics of the community, I was employed as a tinplate-worker, in the firm of Mathews and Masterman, of Union Court, Holborn Hill; and in that year, the general complaint of distress drew my

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attention to the state of politics, or to politics generally. Before this year, I had neither read the writings of Paine or of any other political writer. I do not recollect that I had ever bought a newspaper. I was in as complete a state of political ignorance as any animal called man on the face of the earth. Distress and a general complaint of distress was the stimulus to my political enquiry. I began to be a politician without the aid of books, and this circumstance and the want of experience in the political affairs of the world caused me to think of nothing but the figure I would strive to make in taking an active part in the much-talked-of and much-expected general and revolutionary insurrection. I had no political acquaintance out of the work-shop. I was one of no party; my views, however erroneous, were as purely patriotic as ever were the views of any man.

During the year 1816, and before I began to sell books in 1817, I had not read a single pamphlet of Paine's; my political reading was confined to a few newspapers, to Cobbett's Register and to the Black Dwarf; none of which appeared to me that sort of political food which I, and, as I thought, others, wanted and ought to have. The Black Dwarf was my favourite, until Mr. Sherwin's "Republican" appeared, the title alone of which enamoured me.

While working at the mechanic's bench, I had begun to scribble scraps for the newspapers, the whole of which were condemned as too violent. I felt a burning desire to print something of my own writing; though I now confess, that I was not then competent, from inexperience as to politics and literature, to write a sentence fit for the public eye. In this state of excited mind, I began to think of turning bookseller. The story of Lackington's beginning with a stall was often recalled to my mind, and why, thought I, may I not, by perseverance, begin with a stall or a bag, and become as extensive a bookseller as Lackington? The resolution was formed early in 1817, and on the 9th of March, I sallied forth from the manufactory to commence bookselling, with a pound's worth of books in a handkerchief. In a few weeks, my kit consisted of a large green bag, and each week added something to the extent of my sale. In April, before I had given up my bench of work in the manufactory, Mr. Sherwin offered me his little shop in Fleet Street. Though it was a mere hole, one window of the shop now held by Mr. Cobbett, I recollect well, that my ideas of its magnitude and importance as an acquisition were much greater than those which I now conceive in the possession of one of the best shops and houses in the street. It was every thing to me, and I saw it as I now see it, as the first step to a better establishment.

In cogitating on politics while working at my trade, I inferred that no writers, no printers, no publishers, whose works came under my eye, were bold enough to prepare the people to work the necessary reform or redress of grievances. I saw, that the

suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act frightened away the little courage that had been exhibited, and England appeared to me, in its politics, to be going back to the state of the Continental system. Under this view of things, I formed the resolve to shrink from nothing that could tend to instruct, or to give courage in the way of example to, the public. Whether I have firmly acted upon this resolve, I leave to the conclusion of the reader. I could not see a good reason why discussion on any subject should be forbidden, nor upon what good motive a desire to forbid it could rest; therefore, I fixed on *free discussion* as my moral war-cry—and took *perseverance*, under all circumstances, as my motto. Has it, or has it not, been well done?

This statement is so stale, as a repetition, that, I must pledge myself, that, this shall be "*positively the last time*," except, that, I hereafter write my own memoir, like other great men, who fear that no one else will be at the trouble to do it for them. In stating my past conduct, it was necessary to say something of the early points of my political career; and, like Mr. Cobbett, I find, that no one can speak of myself like myself. A certain line of conduct has led me to the acquisition of a certain character. I state my motives for that line of conduct and leave the reader to draw his own inferences, as to whether they are apparently correct.

I have stated that I was entirely ignorant of the subject of politics at the commencement of the year 1816; and I state, that I was entirely ignorant of the subject of religion at the commencement of the year 1817. The first stimulant to my examination of that subject was the prosecution of the Parodies on the Book of Common Prayer, as blasphemous and profane. Thrown into an imprisonment of eighteen weeks for the publication of the parodies, the dawnings of my present state of mind as to matters of religion commenced. From that, my first, imprisonment, the subject of religion has been my regular study; and my conclusion, after as much examination as ever man gave to any subject, is, that religion is the greatest vice that has appeared among mankind, and one of the principal causes, if not the principal cause, of all the misery that attends them.

While confined in the Gaol at Dorchester, the subject of religion was my peculiar study. It was there that I saw and announced that religion had no association with morality, and that they were distinct principles in the human mind, a complete antithesis; the one, the root of vice; the other, the root of all virtuous action. It was in the Gaol, that I so far examined the powers and properties of matter as to assert, that the doctrine of spiritual intelligences is a doctrine of fictions; that intelligence is solely a principle of the animal organization; and that reason is not a natural gift of God to man, but that it is wholly an artificial acquirement. A knowledge of these simple facts constitute the

grand emancipation of the human mind from all the errors and the vices of religion. It may venerate venerable objects; but it will never again venerate the phantoms of a corrupted imagination.

The imprisonment which I have suffered in the course of my career was no more than that on which I had calculated. I had read of individual sufferings bringing about great amendments in law, and often great revolutions. And I courted the punishment which I saw would lead to an acknowledgment of the propriety of free discussion. I gloried in each hour of my imprisonment, and in that of others who were confined on the same occasion, assured, that it was the necessary prelude to the establishment of true liberty among mankind, the liberty of the mind. The religion which chains down the individual to a system is a far more degrading slavery than the chains which fetter the body of a slave, and confine him to certain labour. A thoughtful slave has been known to be happy—Epictetus for instance; but a religious mind is never happy in relation to its social acts, duties, and associations. It looks upon moral duties as matters of little import; and, while fixing its “affections on things above,” neglects the common duties of parent, friend, and neighbour. I have warred with religion, I have been successful on a large scale, and I now present myself to the public with congratulations on what has been done, and on what I am now in a condition to do.

In maintaining the war of discussion, to accomplish its freedom, I confess, that I have often had to resort to personalities. I cannot see that I have been wrong in so doing, as my case was peculiar, and I was personally assaulted with all the venom that Christianity or religious fury could apply. The “Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge” has frequently designated me in its publications as a “wretch;” almost every Christian has paid me the same compliment; while I feel that they are the wretches, and that I am a high-minded man, with a spirit above every thing that is low, grovelling, or base. I cannot truckle so as to be a passive hypocrite upon the wretchedness of religion. Instead of calling me a wretch, the Christians should acknowledge that I am a bold, open, fair, and generous enemy, ready to converse in the most familiar and most polite manner with any of them, utterly incapable of being the first to give a personal affront in conversation, always desiring to be instructed or to instruct, and ready to conciliate wherever it can be honourably done.

Christians! I am not a wretch. I have discovered that your religion is falsely founded in history and in physics; I have shewn you the allegory upon which it has arisen; and in so doing, I am your friend and the universal friend of my species. I will do nothing, I will adhere to nothing, I will associate myself with nothing, that is wretched. My error, if any, shall be on the side of suspicion and scrupulous exactness as to the persons and

things with whom I connect myself. I have uniformly acted on this disposition, and in so doing have gained some ill-will. Publicly situated and publicly marked as I have been, I have had to encounter the intrusions of all sorts of characters; but I feel both a pride and a pleasure in saying, that I have not made a bad man my companion, nor given the least countenance to an individual, after I have seen his moral reputation soundly impeached. But as to my assaults upon the religion of the country, or upon its political and theological rule, I glory in them, as the first signs of free discussion that must produce good. Good has been already produced. The religious and political tone of the country is very different from what it was seven years ago—much of the fury of religious zeal and of political party animosity is abated, and all classes in a better state of mind for mutual instruction and improvement.

I present myself to you as an individual, the business of whose life shall be to work reforms in whatever he sees to be wrong, and though such an individual must necessarily be troublesome and be opposed to and by many, he is not the less generally useful. I present myself to you, as one who considers the present but as the commencement and not the conclusion of his career, and who will bestir himself wherever he sees that he can make himself useful. Upon this ground, and this only, I ask your support, not in the shape of subscriptions, but in the way of business and the good offices of explanation and recommendation, just as far as you can see that support likely to conduce to your own benefits.

In beginning my political career, I had those common notions which the enthusiasm of youth and inexperience produces, that all reforms must be the work of physical force. The heat of my imagination shewed me every thing about to be done at once. Time and experience have cooled that enthusiasm, or rather corrected it, I trust, without abating any of its useful parts. I am now enthusiastic, but it is in working where I can work practically, rather than theoretically; and though I would be the last to oppose a well-applied physical force, in the bringing about of reforms or revolutions, I would also be the last in advising others to rush into useless dangers that I would shun or where I would not lead. I have long formed the idea, that an insurrection against grievances in this country must, to be successful, be spontaneous and not plotted, and that all political conspiracies, private caballings, or secrets are general, and may be local and even individual, evils. I will never countenance any thing of this kind, by word or deed. I never did give countenance to any thing in the shape of a political conspiracy; I detested the treachery that I have seen necessarily associated with it; and though my situation has in some measure compelled me to be the receptacle of rumours that were afloat upon such subjects, I challenge the omniscience of the Home Department, to say, whether, by any words written or spoken, or by any acts acted, I have done

any thing contrary to what I here state. My future career shall be as open as the past has been, and I will do nothing, in a political point of view, that cannot be openly done.

The science of political economy is working great changes and doing much to unite all classes of politicians. It is a fair search after truth, about which, when found and exhibited, men cannot differ. I will, in future, strenuously aid in this search after truth and a better state of politics, and seek to wear down the asperities of political animosity, by giving and taking mild instruction.

The distinctions of Tory, Whig, Reformer, Radical, and even that of Republican, are empty words without a practical application; and if that application be good and useful, the one name is as good as the other, and each and all had better be dispensed with as bars to a right understanding of each other. There can be no real evils in a country but taxation and impediments to free trade, free enquiry, and free discussion. Remove as much as is wisely possible of that taxation and the whole of these impediments, and all is done in the way of reform that can be done. Now, who is he of any party, who will stand forward and say, that the one proposition or the other is improper?

The religion established by law, like the politics of this country, is a question of revenue. The "strong holds of this religion" are the benefices which its taxation affords to a few families. The reduction of this religion is also a reduction of taxation, and altogether a political question. With me, the only question is, is it useful? I find it a vice, an injury to the community as a whole; and, therefore, to the political motive of reducing it as a taxation, I add the moral motive of overthrowing it as a vice. That it is wholly founded in error, I would gladly maintain before all the Clergy of London in St. Paul's Church. That it has no association with morality, I have proved; and am ready to prove, in any place, or at any time. Historically speaking, as to the Christian Religion, the very existence of Jesus Christ, his virgin mother, and twelve disciples, is a circumstance yet to be proved. We have not a document written in the century in which they are said to have lived that mentions or makes the most indirect allusion to any persons of this description. This did not arise from the absence of competent historians, in that century, to record such events; for it furnished the flower of our early historians. That this religion has its foundation wholly in fable or allegory is a matter now all but demonstrated; and that the received Gospels and Epistles are not to be authenticated as pure and original documents, free from transcriptions and interpolations, is demonstrated. On what, then, Christians, is your religion founded, but on its revenue?

Situated as I have been and as I now am, it is politically impossible that I can be passive on the subject of religion. I desire to overthrow it, for reasons before stated; but I desire also to

overthrow it by the power of free discussion. This discussion, I shall challenge at all times, and in all places, in which I can conveniently be; but wherever or to whomsoever I do present myself with this challenge, it shall be made in the spirit of "peace on earth, and good will toward men." I desire to convert by mild instruction, all those, whose prejudices induce them to reject all discussion, unless it take place upon their own terms.

It is a great point gained, to hold the tacit acknowledgment from the legislature and magistracy of the country, that religion is a matter that may be properly subjected to the test of discussion. It has been most reluctantly yielded and not until it was fairly conquered by we who have endured fines and imprisonments to this end. But that point is gained, and it becomes our duty to shew our superiority over our late persecutors by shewing them, that we will meet them or their agents upon any fair terms of discussion. I cannot suppose the return of the prosecutions and persecutions of the last seven years upon this subject; but should our enemies yet seek revenge, I, on my part, shall meet them with more force than that with which I have before met them, and again stake my life upon the issue.

While I stand prepared for the alternative, I have begun to model my business as if nothing of the kind were again to happen. I stand pledged to conduct a business in the most respectable way, as a political, moral, and philosophical bookseller, and I am now about to redeem that pledge. I have made a large number of most valuable friends by my past firmness, I have their confidence to a singular degree, and I shall now seek to repay their attachment and generosity by mildly seeking to associate with them whoever is respectable in the country. The ground which I have taken, I shall maintain as well chosen by a moderate firmness; and seek to convince all of the rectitude of my past, and of the propriety of my present conduct.

To the ladies, I must particularly address myself, as a general lover, and as one who most sincerely courts their universal countenance. Acknowledging that they are the better halves of men, I can see that if I gain their esteem, that of the men must follow. An anecdote will illustrate the assertion. A Cornish gentleman, who had lately come to town with his wife, bought from my shop, a copy of Thomas Paine's Theological Works. He kept the book snugly in his pocket; but the good wife, whose penetration reached every hole and corner where her spouse could keep his little private matters, under the pretence of taking his handkerchief for the washerwoman, drew forth the "forbidden fruit!" A storm was the consequence, she saw the good man going headlong to hell, so she resolved, that if he determined to go, he should go in a storm. She asserted her mastery, made the bending husband promise that he would return the book to my shop and never again make any kind of purchase from me. He per-

formed his promise in leaving the book with me; but as he had been commissioned by a physician of more knowledge and more nerve than himself, to purchase a collection of my publications, he so far cheated the wife, as to get the parcel sent to Cornwall unknown to her, with an assurance, that he could there find sure and secret opportunities to read the contents. In this and in many other instances, I have seen the importance of getting the ladies on my side; and where prejudices are to be removed, or female influence gained, that of no woman is to be despised.

To the ladies, I offer novelty, which always charms them; but mine is a novelty that requires mental labour to see and to understand it, and to do this, but few ladies feel the disposition. I offer them the charms of mental liberty, and what will add to their personal charms, mental power. However fine the figure or the face, if the lady be ignorant, she carries a stupidity and an awkwardness of manner into good company that detracts full one half from her personal charms. Grace is a carriage that can only be acquired by the knowledge and sensibility of the mind; and bodily grace, without the accompaniment of sensible, agreeable, and commanding conversation, is a mere pretence. It is the stiffness of conceit and not the ease of a well-formed mind. Philosophical scepticism is now a matter of common conversation and no lady should be ignorant of the arguments on which it is grounded. I have published Freret's Letters to Eugenia, and am now printing his letter from Thrasybulus to Leucippe. Each of these pamphlets I commend to the ladies of this country; assured, that, from reading them, they will derive the desire to read the whole of my catalogue. In a short time, I purpose to write and publish a little book, which, I see, is much wanted among ladies, to instruct them in the natural as well as in the artificial art of beauty; and I also think of reprinting that very useful book of Mary Wolstoncroft's, entitled, "The Rights of Woman Vindicated." This I hope will be a doing of something towards a gaining of the solid support of the ladies of this country.

The female mind, more susceptible of imagery than the male, suffers more from the bad effects of religion; and the greater the acuteness or sagacity of the mind, if it be not placed in a right train of investigation, the greater is the mischief which the error infuses. Religion is one species of insanity. Every religious person is more or less insane, and there is no proof of a sound, strong, and well-informed mind, but in the absence of all religion. This has become the sentiment of nine-tenths of our medical and surgical practitioners; for, with them, it has been clearly ascertained, that a religious state of mind is a state of disease; and a dose of salts may occasionally be salutarily used to purge off the effervescence of religious melancholy.

Women, who should be the choicest temples of reason, are brutified and diseased in the reception of the dogmas of religion.

It makes them change their very natures, and from the character of being the bearers of human solace, they form that of warlike vixens. Religion brings another evil to women; it renders them susceptible of the seductions of priests and other religious men, and it is often the case, that the greater the devotee the greater the prostitute. In Catholic countries, this is peculiarly the case.

What I ask from the ladies is not so much a passive acquiescence in what I am doing, but an active assistance; that their feet, their fingers, and their tongues shall move briskly in this endeavour to improve the condition of mankind, and more particularly that of womankind. Thousands of women in this country, particularly of the younger class, waste their time for one of the most ridiculous of purposes, to collect pence for the evangelizing of foreign animals, while the majority of those of this Island are equally ignorant. How much better would it be to see them employed in the distribution and explanation of printed tracts that convey to the mind useful knowledge and indisputable argument? If the mere stirring up of ideas in the ignorant mind be good, it becomes the duty of the individual who directs, to implant the best ideas, those that are least disputable. But these evangelizing ladies want the same thing which they wish to convey to the savage, they want a knowledge of the highest state of knowledge. The begging or collecting of pence for the use of Bible, Religious Tract, and Missionary Societies, is a proof, that the beggar or collector is as ignorant as the savage for whose instruction it is asked. Let these ladies examine the attacks made upon Christianity, and then let them say, whether they can so debase themselves as to beg pence for Priests; for this, after all, is the final purpose of all religious subscriptions, the support of a Priesthood is the end of all religion, and human misery is the food on which they feed.

I call upon every woman in the country to examine well what I have done, what I am doing, and what I am about to do. The Priests and their friends exhort you not to examine. They say, believe, without examination, the false dogmas which we present to you. I say, do not believe without examination any kind of dogmas, religious or irreligious. There are certain objects about us that challenge our examination, and a knowledge of those objects is the sum of all knowledge. The Priests lead you away from the examination of these real objects, and present to your imagination nothing but fictitious phantoms: their whole religion consists of two purposes—to deceive and plunder—to live by deceit without labour on the produce of the labour of others. This is the state of things to which I wish to draw your attention, and be assured, whatever be the conflict of implanting new ideas on all the associations of your first lessons, however unsettled it

may make your minds, your children have much to gain by the changes proposed.

The people of this country were never in a better state to receive instruction than at this moment. There is much distress, at all times the best stimulant to excite enquiry, and with it a sort of political calmness. The country seems to wait for the power of the press and of the better informed part of the people to work the necessary changes. As far as this be practicable, I will not fail to perform my part, and I am of opinion, that another year or two will work great changes. Political affairs have approached a crisis that must produce some change, and a great change, and that within a short period of time. Mr. Cobbett talks largely about convulsion; but if by convulsion he means insurrectionary movements on the part of the people, I am of opinion, that for a century past, there has not been less disposition on the part of the people for any thing of the kind. Political convulsion or insurrectionary movements never arise but from great sufferings; therefore, they are at all times justifiable. It is a plotting to produce the stir that should be avoided. Spontaneous feeling of this kind is to be applauded, and shall always find my countenance and encouragements. Indeed, I will go farther, and say, that I will join it, as soon as I see that I can do good by so doing.

Government will be good in proportion with its cheapness, if we combine this axiom with the first principle, that government to a certain degree is necessary, and that a certain degree of taxation is as necessary to support it. The great aim, therefore, of all parties and all persons should be to render it as cheap as possible; and so long as the religious taxation stands it will be difficult to get rid of any large portion of the other. The taxation of religion may be reduced by a mere proclamation on the part of the majority of the people that they do not think it necessary. Here all the dissenters from the Church as by law established may consistently join the dissenters from all religion, and work out this great benefit. This would be better than the cry of sect against sect about religious tenets, every one of which is wrongly founded.

Opposing all sects, it is not to be expected that I give peculiar support to any one. I join the no popery people; because I think that popery ought to be abolished. I join the advocates of Catholic emancipation; because I think there should be no kind of religious exclusions from public offices. I join each of the various sects of dissenters, in whatever they see wrong in the tenets of any other sect; and if they were wise, they would see that they could unite all only by joining with me in the cry against all. It is I who have made straight the path for religious union. It is I who have blocked up the broad path to destruction. Come to me all

ye that are heavily laden with religious burthens, and I will give you rest. I will remove the yoke from your shoulders, and give you that spiritual joy, which you will seek in vain elsewhere. Rally round the No. 62, Fleet-street, pick up the spiritual food that you will there find scattered for your use, and feed and be happy. I do not desire such a crowd about my windows, as I left at 55. I should be sorry to see such a crowd as would injure the business of my neighbours, as was then the case; but I do hope to find a constant shop full of customers, as the consequence will be an accelerated removal of your manifold grievances. My publications are they which are chiefly calculated to produce the desired political changes. This I can be bold to say without a symptom of quackery.

I deserted my narrative, lest it should become tedious, so now I return to it.

In breaking forth into the political world, humble and obscure as I was, my first acquaintances were the chief clamourers of the day, and all those who followed political clamour as they would follow any other trade. Men without any knowledge of or attachment to good political principles. Mine was a purpose very different from theirs, and I found neither encouragement nor sympathy from them, as I passed through the ordeal which I had courted. Indeed, they were my first powerful secret enemies; for to defend their own line of conduct, they decried mine; and strenuously sought to undermine what little of popular support I first received. I have worn them out, and now I see them disposed to hang about me, as if they had been my most fast friends. With these men, I shall hold no intercourse, and check every attempt they may make to renew an acquaintance. I reject them not as old acquaintances; but as men who have been tried and found wanting—men, with whom to associate, would now be my disgrace. Further, I hold myself ready to prevent any political mischief that they may be disposed to do, and, if necessary, will war with them, as I have warred with Cobbett. Political reforms are only to be accomplished by honest, earnest, and well-informed men; your mere clamourer about politics and patriotism is a nuisance in the pursuit, and it becomes a matter of importance to shake off such assuming assistants, which, if not shaken off, will assuredly impede if not wholly frustrate your purpose. The present is a manifesto of my future intentions, as well as a narrative of past deeds, and I much wish that all parties and all persons should know how I feel disposed towards them. Rather disposed to conciliate than to offend, I have still the duty to keep a pure connection, and to give no countenance to any person that does not participate in my views.

The futile political clamour of the "Radical Reform" era, that which was to preserve and only to purify the constitution, as by law established in Church and State, to purify the God! the

King! the Lords! the Priests! That which was to preserve all the dolls for the national nursery, and merely to take away their costly dresses, that nonsensical clamour, of which the great Henry Hunt was the leader, is now extinct. That clamour has been a considerable check to the welfare of the people; because, with it was allied both treachery and hypocrisy, and the whole thing was carried on and ended as a general delusion. There was nothing good about it. There was nothing wise and well managed in it. All was trick, political and party intrigue, personal quarrel and imbecility. Where is now your Great Northern Union Subscription? Where your Radical Reforming M. P.'s? Where your brave Knights of Saint Henry of Ilchester? Where your white hats? I am no apostate from you. I countenanced none of these things. I exposed them as they arose; and was in my return exposed to the rancour of those whose tricks were foiled. This reminiscence is not revengeful; it is meant to illustrate to you the superiority of those political principles which I then advocated, still advocate; and which I purpose successfully to advocate until some great public change be produced. These political principles I maintained through six years of incarceration and gave them so much weight by sincere maintenance that their most bitter opponents have ceased to reproach them, and have tacitly admitted them to take their station in the field of political discussion. But where are your political, your radical reforming, principles? Reproached as insincere, reviled as futile, and beaten down as impracticable.

The condensed history of my persecution, and of those who have been persecuted with me, must form the subject of a distinct volume. Many things yet remain undone that are to be connected with it, and this general allusion to the matter will here suffice.

My prospects as to the future are successive of that which I have begun and continued to the extent of my means. To print and publish whatever useful political and theological books fear or prejudice might have elsewhere suppressed; to maintain the obtained reputation of this country as the most free on the face of the earth. To pursue the overthrow of whatever doctrines are not founded in truth, and to seek to give the political institutions of the country a better foundation. To attack abuses wherever I see them and can make time for them, and, above all things, to shew that an attachment to the existing state of things, when corrupt, is not the highest degree of social order. Other prospects may open and be embraced; but these are all that present themselves at this moment, and, with these, I desire to pursue as quiet a career, as the subjects to be discussed will admit of. Persecution has worked its own cure; and a relapse would but aggravate the matter complained of. This comes not in the shape of threat. I speak with the conviction of one who feels that he has not vio-

lated any law to procure his long imprisonment, and who now contemplates not the violation of any law. Discussion is a matter above the law, it is the just foundation of law, and he, who most extends it and makes it most free, will do most toward the support and amendment of law.

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ON THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF PRIESTS.

BY PHILANTHROPOS.

WITHOUT entering into speculations relative to the antiquity of the human race, whether all the species of man are co-eval, or that the revolutions of matter formed them at different periods, I shall start from an indefinite epoch. The earliest operations of man must have been those prompted by his wants, by his passions, by his desires; bodily feeling demanded its appropriate supply; his first task would be to counteract the pain of hunger by food, thirst by drink, and cold by warmth; the agreeable would be preferred to the disagreeable, repose to fatigue, pleasure to pain: in this plain state all the passions would be simple, there would be neither envy, avarice, nor superstition; these perspective passions could only arise as men became sufficiently numerous to form bodies and gathered experience from practice; a man most useful to his fellows, would be honoured in preference to one that neither could nor would contribute to the public benefit. The individual most skilled in the rude arts would be regarded as a benefactor; in a rude state of society homage would be commanded by bodily force, as that faculty in every generation would reach its *acme*, while the power of the mind would be of slow growth, and many ages would be required to gain the knowledge of a child of this day: the congregate mind of the people would only accumulate by the slowest stages, sometimes progressive, at others retrograde, as experience could only accelerate its course, it must be remembered how every effort would be retarded, when both language was wanted to convey ideas, as well as a want of ideas; in the infancy of society there would be a greater want of language than ideas, which would make abortive useful conceptions of things; this is still known by those who study the character of isolated bodies of the people who are still ignorant of the commonest things. If it is supposed that the people of *Terra Australis*, a race distinct from the European, have existed as long as the European, the slower progress of knowledge in the one must be evident, and if they are supposed to be a recent race, and as well organized as Europeans, it might be assumed in the progress of time, that had they had no inter-

course with foreigners, they would have arrived at a similar state of civilization. In every class of animals nature exhibits a gradation of orders, some are more, others less organized, and it is ridiculous to conceal from ourselves, that there are lower orders of men than either the European or the Mongol.

In this slow, imperceptible, and nightly progress of the human mind to the formation of language, reflection could not turn to the past, nor could it be expected to penetrate the future; the present objects would absorb the attention; the ignorant but uncorrupted people would be strangers to those base passions and malevolent affections that tarnished the progress of society; a constant and undeviating effort to improve their condition could only have produced events both to admire and deplore. *A base part of the people at an era, perhaps as difficult as it is useless to establish, became unwilling to supply their wants by industry.* For gain they founded schemes of aggrandizement and monopoly upon the weakness of their brethren; as hope and fear would only occupy a portion of the human mind, those priests, for so they may be called, would pretend to regulate such events as excited those passions: religion never arose from the feeling of the main body of the people, but from the wickedness of a rotten portion who found it more profitable to swindle than labour; superstition is not an inherent passion, but idleness is, and as a class of people began to live upon the simplicity of the rest, they would vary their machinations according to the intelligence of the people they had to dupe. There must have been priests before there were idolaters, it is the priests that have created gods, if there had been no priests there would have been no gods. An advanced state of civilization and refinement would only enable the priests to speculate upon the metaphysical doctrines of an invisible intelligence and immortality, the unaccountable and undescribed phenomena of surrounding nature the priests would drag to their aid; they would pretend supernatural powers existed over whom they had controul, and, with a view to their temporal policy, they established rites and ceremonies, to fleece and mislead the people.

One condition of society is best calculated to advance the progress of priestcraft: it would best flourish in the epocha of demi-barbarism, when the people would be too ignorant to reason, and too learned to be savage: in the former state any speculations relative to a Deity would not exist, priestcraft would be unknown and unprofitable, the savage would not want any spiritual guide, his simple senses would make him laugh if a brother savage saw any thing but the operations of nature, the priests' enigmas, mysteries, prodigies, miracles, and speculations, would bring no rewards; and if there were no rewards, there would be no priests; and if there were no priests, there would be no religion; and if there was no religion, the savage would lead a happy life and

close it in tranquillity, as an infinite number of his forefathers had done; the harvest of the priest is between ignorance and the dawn of reason; the savage and the reasoner are equally unprofitable to priests, they are those extremes of the human mind he cannot controul to his gain: so it is in childhood and dotage that man is the prey of priests.

If it could be proved that any religion existed in the savage state of man, it would not be so barbarous as in its subsequent states; man being surrounded by natural objects, ignorant of sophistry, and untutored in those subtle and wicked practices that mark the priest's progress, he would be totally void of religion, and when the priests began to successfully exercise their tricks upon his ignorance, he would only pay homage to some of the most striking objects that surrounded him: this worship, although useless in itself, would not be stained by those absurd deeds and horrid tragedies that were afterwards engrafted upon it. Although the worship of a river, a tree, or a stone might be foolish, yet if such simple idolatry was unattended by merit, it was not marked by crime: as this simple worship was less favourable to the venal views of the priests, than the complex and mysterious, it was changed by their order into absurd rites and ceremonies that disgraced human nature; but a return to the worship of nature is the only one that can wisely be practised, a simple condition of idolatry is not likely to be advocated by priests; a mysterious doctrine the people cannot understand makes them resort to the priests for advice and instruction, one God would not produce much of a harvest, but the pope, the devil, and a thousand saints have brought in abundance of riches. The people are never devout until they are bewildered, the priests lead their dupes into mazes and bewilder them, till at last they forget common sense. Deism, whether savage or philosophic, will never be supported by priests; as it would be without parade and ceremony it would bring a far less revenue than superstition accompanied with a multitude of mysteries and rites.

It has been regarded as a phenomenon, that priests of all ages, all nations, and all dogmas have been the same, men resorting to a profession founded upon imposture, as acting upon similar principles of policy, must ever identify themselves without concert, with fraud, evasion, and hypocrisy: to preserve dominion over the human mind, ignorance must be inculcated on one hand, and deceit acted on the other; the priests by pretension to divine agency soon ceased to be restrained by those moral obligations that checked the licentious passions of other men; professing to be more than mortal, they despised men who continued to be actuated by reason and honourable motives. The progress of priestcraft proves, that it has always been the intention of priests to create spiritual empires and elect themselves governors, so that they might reign absolute over the life and property of their dupes:

the progress of fraud preceded the progress of reason, and until this order is reversed, the priests will triumph over justice. The inconsistency of the priests exposes their own delinquency—they preach the patience they never practise; deprecate the deceit they exercise; attack duelling and defend war; forward to preach against wealth, and the first in the rank of sordid avarice; they talk as if they could live but for a day, and act as if they could live for ever; they profess humility, and practise splendour—submission, and exercise tyranny. Do the lives of the clergy and the maxims of the Gospel correspond? While the body of the people were ignorant, without reason, and void of that reflection necessary to compare ideas, such contradictions would be seldom detected: but the increase of knowledge enabling the dupes to detect the tricks of the impostors, the cheats had their masks torn off and exposed. The situation of this body, acquired by a long succession of gain and power, made it difficult of attack; entrenched in strong holds, and having enlisted under its banners of religion a great part of the unsuspecting people, they have had the address to make them fall upon their benefactors; they have raised an outcry of blasphemy against those more wise, more liberal, and more charitable than themselves, and destroyed them by adroitly managing the passions—sometimes exciting hope, at other times fear, they commanded the moral world; urged by gain and power, the priests have engaged nations, who never dreamed of the individual interest of their blind guides, to worry each other; but priests in all religious quarrels have private views to attain; the cause of God is the cause of the priests' pocket, the cause of his country the accession of his power: the priests have been uniformly adroit in persuading their dupes that they were advocating the people's cause and not their own, and while they pursued the most profound designs upon the pockets of the people they professed candour, self denial and disinterestedness: practised in the deepest dissimulation and acting with trained conceit, people ignorant of letters or swayed by bigotry would be readily deceived.

The priests who best understand the principles of their trade pay no regard to what is true, but only attend to what is profitable; if they acted otherwise they would not be priests, if they were conscientious they would not practise the doctrine of imposture, they would retire from a trade they must shudder at, they would loathe a religion founded upon hypocrisy, they would withdraw their individual countenance from a course of fraud; if they or any one among them, who are more enlightened and do not forsake their trade when they have discovered that it is founded in avarice and imposition, they are more culpable than those who believe in the nonsense they preach. The priests impute all sorts of human vices to God, they impute to him all the crimes and virtues due to men. In the name of God the priests commit every

enormity: whoever disbelieves the nonsense has the pleasure of exciting their venom, and they pour out their filth and anathemas in God's name. This spiritual artillery is laughed at by the reasoner, and instead of proving any thing of God only better exposes the demon priest. All sorts of impostures pretend to divine agency and favour, and if there is any wickedness on earth, it is committed by priests assuming divine attributes to effect some base and malicious purpose. Since the priests have succeeded in establishing religion as a trade, they have trumped up a parcel of lies which they continually vary, and with those lies they have set up the lucrative trade of religious imposition.

Before the reign of priests, the human mind would not be bound and carried captive by prejudice and superstition, if men were ignorant and had comparatively few ideas, those ideas would be confined to objects with which they were acquainted, there would be nothing in nature to mislead simple and uncorrupted man. The first debasement and corruption of the human mind was accomplished by the nefarious machinations of priests. Having succeeded in exciting a morbid apprehension, they suggested their nostrum religion as a remedy. The priests always pretend to preach for the benefit of the people and never for themselves, they keep their individual benefits behind; if there is any doubt of this let the people cease to pay them and the priests will cease to officiate. Those who first submitted to the guidance of priests, could not be desirous of being robbed and enslaved, the priests depraved the senses of man by exciting a fallacious apprehension; while men possessed right reason they would be difficult to dupe; no religion could have been established if the priests had not held forth a living, revengeful, malicious and arbitrary god, whose favour they could propitiate, and whose vengeance they could conciliate provided they were paid. By threats and promises the priests settled large revenues upon themselves, by base pretences monopolized the fruits of the earth and the product of man's labour. Nothing but false doctrines and pretences have promoted the progress of priests. No honest schemes ever advanced this body to its present power and wealth. Tell me the degree of their power and I will tell you the extent of their riches. Sometimes the people are so unhappy as to be fleeced by kings as well as priests, under such circumstances, the two races of tyrants participate in the plunder, they are generally too politic to disagree about the loaves and fishes, yet cupidity and the despotism of each party have excited the most sanguinary wars, for the sole purpose of deciding who should have the privilege of robbing the honest inoffensive people. Now it seems to be the policy of many regal states to suffer the priests to participate largely, on condition that the priests will preach up the right of passive obedience and non-resistance, and the divine right of kings. The priests in their progress have made a point of destroying the best and wisest

men, they have seldom apprehended any but the good, who they have under some pretext imprisoned, exiled or murdered *. They were sure to be destroyed, if they did not hold sacred the oracles, mysteries, auguries, miracles and incantations. The treacherous priests have instigated the unsuspecting people to commit the greatest acts of injustice upon those men who were their friends and benefactors, who aimed at nothing but the emancipation of the human mind from barbarism, prejudice, and slavery. It is not the martyrs in the cause of liberty that have been disgraced, it is the thoughtless people, the priests have used as tools, that have covered themselves with immortal infamy, it is the fiery bigots who have spilt the blood of the kindest and wisest of mankind. The priests have destroyed the philosophers of all times, because the latter have always devoted their talents to lessen the calamities of human nature.

Without entering into the question of there being any religion, or of the policy of a religion, it is only determined that all existing religions are the contrivance of priests to promote their private interests; a religion founded upon the basis of morality, and kept divested of all the quackery of priestcraft, as has been proposed by the Theophilanthropists, could not be hateful, as nothing but social duties are inculcated, but the existing religions are not only absurd, but inculcate criminal principles. False doctrines never can make men better members of society but worse, for priestcraft is conducted not upon dogmas that ever did or could improve the manners of the people, but upon a plan that augments the finances and spiritual power of the priests. A mere religion has been the most loathsome pest of all countries, because it has originated from the basest passions of the basest part of mankind, who engrossed power under the pretence of public benefit, and converted it into individual profit, to the public injury; before a rational religion can be established, the whole of the present systems, with all their fraud, deceit, perjuries and falsehood must be destroyed; the whole of the rubbish must be swept away, this Augean stable must be cleansed before the foundation of a wise and moral fabric can be laid; perfidy and guilt must be eradicated, human reason must include every thing but what is founded upon the evidence of the senses, if the senses are fallible they are our best and only guide; faith and sophistry must be expelled. The interest and safety of nations demand the exercise of reason. Society is reduced to the most pitiful, abject and detestable state by predominating priests, there is nothing to be hoped for from the continuance of the present systems of religion; chains, poverty and death make their disastrous march, mental and bodily slavery maintained by priests suffocate all the projects that are started for the benefit of human nature. Any philosophic design is mildewed by the direct or indirect influence of the priests, it is

* Vide History of Oracles, p. 116.

time that sensible men arouse from their lethargy and shake off this horrible tyranny, and let the sun of reason shine to dispel the pestiferous mists of priestcraft.

Political conquests however unjust and sanguinary could only enslave the body: the tyranny of the sword is hardly an evil compared with the spiritual tyranny of the priests that debases man below a reasoning creature; the greatest political tyrants of the earth were innocent, spotless and free from crime, when compared with the massacres, assassinations and bloody persecutions committed by priests, in their career to wealth and power. Bigotry and avarice, in spiritual combination, have not only destroyed ten times more people than now exist on the whole earth; but such baseness has barbarised all succeeding generations of men.

Such people as are only superficial observers of the priests' progress, or who may be led by hypothesis to suppose that this class of men are traduced, and that those who have read the best moral writers are not so culpable as represented; such simple people may be assured that the priests of all sects and all times, so far from being the most pious as they never fail to assert, are the most wicked and dissolute of mankind: abandoned to temporal power and sordid avarice, they never do any good except by mistake and then they seriously reproach themselves for it; the priests by better education and long practised subtlety reform upon all the vices perpetuated by mankind, and actually commit crimes other men would shudder at, or are generally exempted from by reason of enormity; the crimes of the priests have become so crying that those who judge impartially do not continue to hope to see one exempt from vice, if they are so it is an exception to the general rule, but if laymen commit a crime it is as the rule to the exception—the priests are generally guilty—the people generally innocent, all the vices of priests lineally descend from one to another with successive corruptions and their corruptions and machinations are their stock in trade, because they fill the exchequer; the concatenation of the priests' villainy has been so orderly that some are not surprised at their extent; the seniors initiate the juniors into the chicanery of their trade, and it is at a youthful age when impressions are durable that the mind is corrupted. In the reigning religion, no honest man can get into holy orders, the only avenue is through the door of perjury, and any one who can deliberately commit an act, the bare mentioning of which the callous perjured priests affect to shudder at, must be so abandoned as to be unworthy the name of man; there is no degree of contempt, scorn and hatred such a wretch does not deserve; the miscreant swears he is moved by the holy ghost, when he is only moved by "filthy lucre," nothing can show the beastly character of the priests better than the corruption of its young members; they make the novices by college and ordination acts commit the most flagrant perjuries, to qualify them for profit and

power; it must be systematically intended to degrade men, to make them take such oaths that they be qualified to exercise sub-perfidy and impiety. If there is even under such circumstances a belief that the oath is conscientious, we may well pity the gross perversion of reason and common sense that prompts such delusions; yet for exposing such vices and absurdities, a man is liable to the most inveterate persecution, and the thoughtless people for whom he labours are induced by the knavish priests to join in the execrable act. The priests are always the most inveterate persecutors, they pursue with the most implacable rancour all who doubt the justice of putting down opposition by the most cruel means, but punish all who differ in opinion, however conscientious. Every priest persecutes with as much zeal as if his whole brotherhood, of all sects and nations, thought with himself. So far from all priests thinking alike, no two have the same religious opinion, amidst the multitude of sects upon the earth. It is the priests who foment and originate persecution. This horrid spirit would not by its own elementary matter be of any duration if it was not excited by the priests, who have venal purposes to answer, the people not being at the labour of thinking for themselves have this passion induced by the priests, who being opposed to the benefactors of the human race, and having a different interest, promote such maxims only as suit their interest. The priests do not pay any regard to the truth of their doctrine but only to the promotions of their trade. The people on the other hand should study the truth for the sake of the truth, they should examine into matters so vitally important, and should never above all things see with the eyes of the enemies. The false doctrines of the priests poison the source of human wisdom and hinder the propagation of useful knowledge, as priestcraft declines so will reason ramify through every avenue of society.

Priests are not only individually fond of pageantry, but they well know that splendid ceremonies captivate unthinking people, magnificent temples and gorgeous parade carry many down the stream of superstition that would resist other modes of seduction. When the priests have been successful in intoxicating the people, they have been lavish in the exhibition of shows; by thus constantly occupying the people's attention, they have been prevented from noticing other things. The priests have had the address to vary religious ceremonies in different climates, to meet atmospheric variation. The Gentoo, the Christian, the Jew, and the Mahometan rites may be cited in proof. If religion was stripped of its splendid, but useless, appendages, it would be reduced to a very harmless and unpopular state; it is upon this account that religion, founded upon good sense and reason, will never make many converts. To make a good trade the priests must make religion something mysterious; abstruse and equivocal in its worship, but specific in its dogmas. The priests must never lose sight of a

heaven and a hell, for, with those two agents, they act upon the hope and fear of mankind, the two most influential passions. Priestcraft never could be profitable without a heaven and a hell; hence we find that the priests of all ages and nations, when they arrived at any degree of perfection in their trade, had those two powers. Consistent with financial views, the priests have created an intermediate condition, or purgatory, from whence mercy could effect a redemption even after death. This master stroke of policy has well paid the actors of this drama.* Indulgences have been another source of wealth, the priests would allow, or promise any thing to their dupes, provided they were paid: the people have been robbed in every manner, there was no escaping the priests' exchequer, they even condescended to regulate eating, and drinking, and clothing.

Bands of Catholic Priests, with a policy that would be creditable in a better cause, keep their dupes in ignorance, and not only deny them the use of the Bible but the knowledge of letters; these subtle rogues take the wives, the daughters, and the money of their slaves when they please. Should a ray of knowledge appear, the vengeance of heaven is invoked, and eternal perdition threatened; when men begin to reason and the priests are unable to preserve entire darkness, they change their ground, and when one system of tricks are exposed, they resort to arms; by turns, they are grave or volatile, mysterious or candid; they will despise those they dread, and flatter the philosopher to the sacrifice; if now and then the political tyrants have sprinkled the earth with blood, the religious have deluged it. If the progress of priestcraft is exposed by a plain reasoner, the priests never neglect to persecute him to destruction, and the honest, the better, and the wiser, so much the surer is his destruction. Priestcraft has nothing to apprehend from the base, the ignorant, and the dissolute, such wretches it hugs to its heart; the good man who teaches his fellow creatures to reason, provokes its persecution; so tenacious are the priests of power, that they do not allow men to defend the justice and mercy of God. They claim the privilege of interpreting the Bible, and every interpretation gives effect to some mercenary view; nothing is religion but what they do, nothing will they do without being paid, so that in short any thing is religion if the priests get money by it; pay, believe, and be saved, notwithstanding the greatest crimes. The subtle policy of the priests is well seen in their anxiety to bring up children in bigotry and error, for they are not only subjected to many ridiculous ceremonies, but sponsors must be had: if this nonsense is not observed, lots of vengeance are poured upon the defaulters, and the malediction of heaven is invoked for a sinless omission; the priests have great reliance upon an early false bias, they hope much from starting on these principles, they well know how diffi-

* Vide Voltaire's Phil. Dict. art. Purgatory.

cult it is to eradicate false impressions. There should be no ceremonies observed except those that are essential to make men better than they are, such as make them superstitious should be discarded as dangerous. Human contrivance never can form part of any religion, and every one must see how much of any religion is made up of human schemes. All religions supported by the sword are false, and all are supported by the sword that are upheld by power; if religion emanates from the Deity, it must be omnipotent without the least aid of human power; because the Deity is omnipotent, and consequently his will is so, the omnipotence of the Deity is always to be distinguished from the little paltry passion of a priest. By contemplating the grand designs of the Deity in the vast expanse of nature, we are more likely to penetrate his humanity and his benevolence, than if we only study the trash views of the venal priests.

The antiquity of the priest's dogmas has been sometimes fallacious to importance, but error brought forward with all the solemnity of fact never misleads men accustomed to reason from the first principles of science; reasoning from the elements of matter invariably dispels the delusions appended to mystery and superstition. It is not to be expected that priests can reason when their very trade is founded upon sophistry and fallacy; when assertion is passed for fact, and superstition for truth, the priests are ever in error in their doctrines, and will ever be refuted by those who reason from axioms founded on nature. While veneration for antiquity consecrated priestcraft, and mantled over those functions that reason now discovers to be fraudulent, the *charlatans* reigned triumphant—but folly and deceit are discovered. Error and false doctrines will often descend from generation to generation as truths, for want of investigation; but apply to superstition the touchstone of reason, delusion is dispelled and absurdity is detected. The priests do not allow their dupes to reason, but command them to believe, or all their affected mysteries would be exploded; they tell the silly people that God has forbidden it under pain of the greatest punishment. All State religion must be a jargon of words and fallacious conjectures, so much so, that its very excess of folly makes it too despicable to merit any serious refutation. All religions have been founded by rogues and madmen; reason never had any thing to do in the foundation of superstition. The tyrannical priests forbid the eyes to be opened, and command the devotees in the name of God to act according to their temporal policy. There would soon be an end of priestcraft if men would only be guided by reason instead of passion; for all religion is but conjecture, and as conjecture is ever various, so must religions be numerous: but if religion was founded upon fact, there could be only one religion. It is impossible for the Deity to have a thousand minds, and wish to be worshipped by as many ridiculous ceremonies; if this was

the case, his versatility would only be equalled by the invention and vices of priests. The very multitude of religions, as multifarious as priests, destroys the possibility of there being any established religion of divine origin.

Fanatics have abandoned themselves to be the prey of the imagination; they are under the guidance of those who arrogate the power of interpreting the divine will; and those interpreters are only human, who are subject to all the delusions, infirmities, and caprices of man. When the spirit of fanaticism and persecution is armed with power, desolation falls upon all those who differ in opinion; and that is always the false religion that falls, and that is the true religion that is established by fire and sword--the moral, the rational, and the human are all heresies. Humanity never actuated the priests in their selection of means to establish religion; they have resorted to the perfidious and the cruel as the most sanguinary policy dictated. If such ruthless measures had eventually produced public benefits, the means might have justified the ends, but when such tragedies introduced a more barbarous state of society, the progress of priestcraft all men of common sense must deplore. The inference from this essay makes it self-evident, that, *man has no innate knowledge, and can have no innate idea of religion; and as he has no innate idea of religion, it must be derived from an external source--and that external source is the base passions of a vain indolence and power, existing in the persons of a part of the people, and that part of the people actuated by the basest passions of the base are the priests, and the chimeras of priests are religion.*

AN ADDRESS TO RICHARD CARLILE:

Comprised in a Poetic Controversial Attack upon Atheism. By CICERO WINTERBOTTOM. Wigan: printed by R. Atkinson and Son. 1823.

Note by Editor.—[The following little poem was printed in 1823, but did not come into my possession until the last year. Ever since it has been in my possession, I have thought it worth preserving in "The Republican," as a part of that discussion which it has excited. I cannot answer Cicero Winterbottom in verse; but if he has been a constant reader of "The Republican," I trust he has found an answer to each of his queries. I confess that the style of his poem is that of civil and candid enquiry; but the more rapid way for a man to gain knowledge is to ask himself a few questions as to what he really does or does not know, in preference to asking another. There is a labour in study, and if a man will not labour for himself, he

will not receive right impressions from the representations of others. The man who thinks forms an original mind of his own; but he who merely reads without thinking receives a colour from the minds of others which is not lasting, and he often attributes that as a weakness to the arguments and conclusions of others which in reality is his own mental weakness.]

R. C.

SIR,

HAVING heard of your zeal for the liberties of mankind, and being myself a well-wisher to my species, I read your publications with more than common attention; I saw with pain your unceasing attempts to overthrow the belief of a God, and determined to vindicate a belief so productive of both that temporal and eternal happiness which your scheme is completely calculated to destroy.

You endeavour to prove that philosophy teaches us that the Christian Religion is not of divine institution; that there is nothing in religion worthy our attention; that it is not reconcileable to human reason; that nothing is worthy our notice that is not within the inquest of our senses; that philosophy has enlightened the mind too much to admit of incomprehensibilities which are repugnant to reason, and which bugbears are common to all religions; that the soul is matter, and, consequently, perishes with the body; that all the dogmas and formulas of religion were only invented to torment man from his childhood to his last moment, by the fear of invisible powers, that render him more unfortunate than he otherwise would be; this you call philosophy.—I always understood philosophy to mean an inquiry into truth, and the love of wisdom. But, by your assertions, she holds the place of Divinity upon earth; she unites, enlightens, aids, and comforts man; she gives us every thing, and requires no worship; she does not demand the sacrifice of our passions, but teaches us how to nourish and cherish them; she dispenses her gifts, interprets her rights, and consecrates her knowledge to man to make him better, so that he may be happier. I venerate the sciences, and those who cultivate them. I acknowledge that arts and letters have abundantly smoothed the path of human life, have mutually assisted each other in diminishing our calamities, strewn with flowers man's passage upon earth, amused the mind with useful and entertaining discoveries, and seem even to shorten our journey, and lengthen that day which some men view with horror and affright. I do, with the most profound sincerity, glory in a sense of the many benefits we have received from the efforts of scientific men, and pay such homage as my silence will best express. But I am superlatively amazed that any human being should be so presumptive as to give the least hint against the existence of a God, or pretend to unravel the unsearchable penmanship of a Deity, and to weigh and construe the inconceivable ways of

heaven by rules and laws made by beings so limited as is poor man, whom a twinge of the tooth-ache, or a prick from the soft tender fork of a fly would cause to forget his great capacities, and acknowledge the frailty of his being.

Nor have sense and reason, any more than philosophy, power to enable us to understand and judge of the scriptures. How can such impotence scan an Omnipotence? or level the work of a Creator to the vague capacity of mortals? Such futile pretenders like the child who cried for the moon, stretch and strain every nerve for nothing. But when they have done, those who have a real sense of religion know that nothing but the emanations of heaven can enable man to understand the works of heaven.

ON ATHEISM.

Good Heaven! that man who vaunts discerning sight,
And arrogant, from wisdom's distant height,
Looks down on holy mortals who revere
A cause Supreme, should the proud building rear
Without one prop the pond'rous pile to bear!
How must the Judge who does in heav'n preside,
Remark the scoffer, and condemn his pride.
But see! the sad unsufferable hour
Advances fast, which will his error cure;
When he, compell'd, shall drink the wrathful bowl,
And ruin'd, feel immortal vengeance roll
Through ev'ry vein, and sink his sinful soul.
Now, Mr. Carline, ingenuous be and kind,
Respond this query of an anxious mind:
Say how you feel yourself when friends depart?
What makes those throbs and wailings of the heart?
Since well you know hereafter nothing is,
'Tis idle stuff to grieve at their decease;
For all on earth is merely pain and strife,
And happy's he who leaves the load of life.
Hence then, my Friend, if nothing is behind,
The screen of time, then nothing there you'll find;
Then pluck up heart, and vanquish ev'ry fear,
For if you must be blest it must be here.
Ransack the country, eat and drink at ease,
Sleep while you will, and rise just when you please;
Indulge each sense with what it may desire;
Call those folks simple who do pay require;
Thanks are sufficient for both drink and meat,
For gratitude itself is sure a treat;
Nor future times do you anticipate,
But take the turns and bolts dealt out by fate;
And when grim death extends his gathering gripe,
Fall off like fruit that is grown fully ripe;

Quit Epicureanism* without pain,
 For who but cowards will even then complain?
 Then when your mother earth has got her own,
 And mourning friends retire and hasten home,
 Then will the chat go round, then friends will say,
 Who feared death so much is turn'd to clay,
 What pity 'tis he thought there was no God—
 Oh! may his soul not feel the wrathful rod.
 Some learning is a curse, not worth our care,
 Such debauchees its zealous vot'ries are.
 Our friend deceas'd had much humanity,
 But tinctur'd much with childish vanity;
 Tenets he held which were a shame to man,
 That there's no God, that nought we see began.
 But since our friend has so much fame acquir'd,
 And as the god of science been admir'd,
 A trifling view we'll of his learning take,
 Nor with too partial mind, nor with mistake.
 Now see what light his wond'rous scheme affords,
 His undigested heap of meaningless words:
 Now can this man, this vague inquirer, show
 The spring whence motion did begin to flow:
 Since nothing of itself e'er moves or strives,
 Tell what begins, what the first impulse gives?
 Hear how this man, who all in fame surmounts,
 For motion's spring and principles accounts:
 For a supreme incommutable God,
 He the first sphere appoints for fate's abode.
 If we demand by what impulsive force
 The worlds at first began their circling course,
 He says, as things desirable excite
 Desire and objects move the appetite,
 So harmony of springs a sympathy produce,
 For things the fittest, to all motion use;
 Thus nerv'd, they move like wheels of fiery cars,
 Deck'd with a gorgeous equipage of stars;
 From world to world communicate their dance,
 Like Handel's choir harmoniously advance.
 "Thus from this motion propagated rise
 "All motion in the earth, and air, and skies."
 Now prudent 'tis one question just to ask,
 And sure it is a very easy task.
 I think, I move, I therefore know I am,
 While I have been, I still have been the same,
 Since from an infant I a man became. }
 "But tho' I am, few circling years are gone,
 "Since I in nature's number was unknown;"
 And since 'tis plain I have not always been,
 I ask, from whence my being could begin?
 I did not to myself beginning give, }
 Nor from myself the sacred pow'r receive
 By which I reason, and by which I live.

* The Doctrine of Epicurus, a famous Athenian Philosopher, who made the Supreme Good to consist in pleasure.

If I had form'd myself, I had design'd
 A stronger body, and a wiser mind;
 From sorrow free, nor liable to pain,
 My passions should obey, and reason reign.
 Nor could my being from my parents flow,
 Who neither did my parts or structure know:
 Nor did my mind or body understand
 The sex determin'd, nor my shape command:
 Had they the organ of my senses wrought,
 And form'd the wond'rous principles of thought,
 Their artful work they must have better known,
 Explain'd its springs, and its contrivance shown:
 If to myself I did not being give,
 Nor from immediate parents did receive;
 It could not from my predecessors flow,
 They, than my parents could no more bestow.
 Should we the long depending scale ascend
 Of sons and fathers, will it never end?
 If 'twill, then must we thro' the order run
 To some one man, whose being ne'er begun.
 If that one man was supernatural, why
 Did he since independent ever die?
 If from himself his own existence came,
 The cause that could destroy his being, name.
 To seek my Maker, thus in vain I trace
 The whole successive train of human race;
 Bewilder'd, I my Author cannot find,
 Till some great first—some self-existent mind,
 Who form'd, and rules all nature, is assigned.
 When first my mother's womb that speck did hold,
 From whence my future self did so unfold;
 What natural cause did o'er this work preside?
 What vigour gave, and did each motion guide?
 What kindled in this state the vital flame,
 And ere the heart was form'd, push'd on the stream?
 Then for the heart, the fittest fibres strung,
 And in the breast the impulsive engine hung.
 "Tell what the various bones so wisely wrought,
 How was their frame to such perfection brought?
 What did their figures for their uses fit,
 Their numbers fix, and joints adapted knit?"*
 The wond'rous whole stupendous is as this,
 Therefore to see a God you cannot miss.
 I'm told by authors not of lies suspected,
 That Galen,† by this study was converted.
 The fabric man in pieces did he take,
 Due observation of each part to make;
 All which such skill discover'd to his view,
 He cry'd, that there's a God there's nought so true.
 The Atheist, if to search for truth's inclin'd,
 May in himself a full conviction find;
 And from his body teach his erring mind.

* Blackmore.

† A noted Physician, who flourished in the reign of the Emperor Commodus.

I know you'll persist, and foully will maintain,
 Of causes and effects, an endless train;
 That this successive series still has been,
 Will never cease, and never did begin;
 That things did always, as they do, proceed,
 And no first cause, no wise director need;
 And thus in learned Richard Carlile's mind,
 All things were form'd, nor any thing design'd.
 He owns no choice, no arbitrary will,
 No artist's hand, and no exerted skill;
 All motion flows from necessary fate,
 Which nothing does resist, or can abate;
 Things sink and rise, a being lose or gain,
 In a coherent undissolved chain;
 And thus from fate all artful order springs,
 This rear'd the world, this is the rise of things.
 How does learn'd Carlile this one cause unfold,
 With equal swiftmess why the sun is roll'd?
 Still east and west, to mark the night and day,
 To form the year, why through th' ecliptic way?
 What magic, what necessity confines
 The solar orb betwixt the tropic lines?
 What charm in those enchanting circles dwell,
 Pray let me know, for sorely you can tell.
 But further yet, applauded Sir, suppose,
 Celestial motion from your spring arose;
 That motion down to all the world below,
 From the first sphere may propagated flow.
 Since you of things to shew th' efficient source,
 Have always to necessity recourse,
 From what necessity do spheres proceed,
 With such a measur'd such—a certain speed?
 I fain would this mysterious cause explore,
 Why motion was not either less or more,
 But in this due proportion and degree,
 As suits with nature's just economy.
 This is a cause, a right one too, we grant,
 But 'tis the final, we the efficient want.
 With greater swiftmess if the spheres were whirl'd,
 The motion given to this inferior world,
 Too violent had been for nature's use,
 Of too great force mix'd bodies to produce;
 The elements, air, water, earth, and fire,
 Which row to make compounds of things conspire,
 By their rude shocks could never have combin'd,
 Or had been disengag'd as soon as join'd;
 But had a motion in a less degree
 Been given, than that which we in nature see,
 Of greater vigour they had stood in need,
 To mix and blend the elemental seed;
 To temper, work, incorporate, and bind
 Those principles, that thence of ev'ry kind,
 The various compound beings might arise,
 Which fill the earth and sea, and store the skies?
 Say what necessity, what fatal laws,
 Did in such due proportion motion cause;

Nor more or less, but just so much as tends
 To frame the world, and serve all nature's ends.
 Tell why the highest of the rolling spheres,
 Deck'd to profusion with refulgent stars;
 And why one planet satellites has seven,
 Why fate to Jove has not so many given.
 Say, if the world uncaus'd, did ne'er begin,
 If nature, what it is has always been,
 Why do no wars the poet's song employ
 Before the Theban broils, or siege of Troy?
 And why no older histories relate
 The rise of empires, and the turns of state?
 If generations infinite are gone,
 Tell why so late were arts and letters known;
 Man in mechanic arts did late excel,
 That succour life, and noxious pow'rs repel,
 Which yield supplies for necessary use,
 Or which to pleasure, or to pomp conduce.
 How late was found the loadstone's magic force,
 That seeks the north, and guides the sailor's course.
 But pray forgive me, my prolixity,
 Nor term it, Sir, an impropriety;
 For on the whole, the reasons which you give,
 To make in this necessity believe,
 So trifling are, absurd, and trite, and dry,
 That those should blush who make a grave reply.
 So since these things your reasoning ne'er can shew,
 Be just for once, and ignorance allow;
 "Say nature bows to the almighty nod."
 Call it the will, the pow'r, the hand of God;
 For why should man pure reason's path refrain,
 And thus his Maker's wond'rous works disdain?
 It must proceed from ignorance and pride,
 Whoever does th' Omnipotent deride,
 And will not in his providence confide.

TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE, 62, FLEET STREET.

SIR, Woodside, near Aberdeen, June 22, 1826.

I REJOICE that you are again at liberty after six years of cruel imprisonment by your Christian persecutors. You have, single-handed, done wonders. You have fought a battle without parallel in the annals of history, and have conquered. Your noble perseverance, and undaunted courage, have done more than the Philosophers, Statesmen, or Warriors, that ever lived. You have set at liberty not the body, but the mind. You have made thousands to think for themselves who were deeply sunk in the den of ignorance and superstition and received without inquiry or

examination whatever was told them by the priest. But for all that has been effected, there is still much more to do. In this remote part of the country, thousands are yet in a most deplorable state; superstition and priestcraft still reign with unlimited sway, except with only a few; and gods, devils, ghosts, witches, and fairies, still haunt the habitation of the labouring man; who possibly has neither heard of the name of Carlile, nor of any of your publications, or by reason of their expensiveness has not been able to purchase them. Now, Sir, if I may take the liberty to tell you, their cheapness is an object of the greatest importance to the cause of free discussion, and the propagation of the principles you so nobly advocate. The general part of them is by far too dear for a poor man, and of course greatly hurts their circulation, for we must proceed more by stealth than by storm, and for that purpose cheap publications are the most proper. The *Bon Sens*, a work of great merit, has been published at such a price, as to deter most people from purchasing it; for, to my knowledge, six copies for one would have been ordered from this place had the price been moderate. The *Doubts of Infidels*; the *System of Nature*, and the *God of the Jews*, from their perspicuity and wit are irresistible. Print editions of such works as these in the cheapest manner you possibly can, with hand-bill catalogues, and the prices and small descriptions of each work: a few sent to your friends throughout the country, to be handed about, would greatly advance the cause of free discussion and annoy the priests, whose greatest safety is to keep them from being known. Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Ascalon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. By paying a little attention to the above hints, you will greatly oblige your friend and admirer,

WM. INMAN.

P. S. Being a constant reader of your "Republican," I have got a look at the annexed, and I agree with Wm. Inman as to the contents of his letter; but I would suggest to you if you cannot afford to let us have these principal works cheaper, to publish them in weekly numbers, the same as Clarke's Letters, and I am confident you would extend the sale of them in this and in every other place where your publications are read.

Your constant admirer,

ALEX. SIM.

ANSWER BY R. CARLILE.

It must be laid down as a certainty that all books cannot be brought within the scale as to price of the poor man's pocket,

there must be some which he must borrow, get in the best manner he can, or not read. I find many books, which I much desire, beyond my means of purchasing. I see people of fortune in the same condition. It is difficult or rather impolitic to publish two or three editions of one book at one time. The cheap books which Messrs. Inman, Sim, and others, require, would not suit the taste of those who have money and wish to form neat looking libraries. And as to the publishing of all large books in Numbers, it often becomes bad work for the publisher. Many persons begin without going on, many Numbers get destroyed, so that at the end of a volume, the publisher has hundreds of some sheets and none of some half dozen Numbers to make perfect books. There is no remedy for this but in stereotyping, and stereotyping does not suit every person's purpose, does not suit mine at present. For the octavo books printed for the Joint Stock Book Company, I have fixed the price of fourpence per sheet as near as possible, and that is no more than a fair price.

I am now printing a small copy of Palmer's Principles of Nature to sell as cheap as possible, and it is my intention, after I get well settled, to publish as cheaply as possible, whatever I see to be most useful; always remembering, that I desire to pay my stationer's bill, which many cheap publishers have not been particular about doing.

In Lancashire, much complaint exists about my altered price; but that price is now unalterable and all parties must accomodate themselves to it. It is the price at which all the fair dealing London houses do their business and to it I will stick. A few subscribers more or less will not affect me. They who like "The Republican" will find means sooner or later to get it, they who do not like it, or care but little about it, may as well drop it on this excuse as on any other.

In answer to William Blackshaw's letters about Mr. and Mrs. Fildes, I cannot hesitate to say, that the husband denies the wife's approbation of the instructions of the "Every Woman's Book"; but I am not without authority for my statement, if there was no mistake or misrepresentation on the part of one of the wife's acquaintances.

On the subject of the mis-stated flight of Mr. Cobbett from Preston, I have to say, that the report of Mr. Cobbett's leaving Preston on the Monday evening, was so reported in the Wednesday Morning's papers, that no inference could be drawn, but that he had flown not to return. The Thursday's paper stated the appearance of the son on the hustings as a substitute, and there was not a hint of the probable return of the father. It was under this state of the report that I wrote "flight from Preston," and there was some excuse too on my side from the many former flights. I have not the least desire to misrepresent Mr. Cobbett, Mrs. Fildes, or any other person, and I confess that the subsequent return of

Mr. Cobbett destroyed the appearance of flight in his short absence from Preston. I had prepared a notice of this week's Register, but found no room for it.

EXTRACT FROM MR. BLACKSHAW'S LETTER.

THE young philosopher, whose name is Detrosier, still continues to draw crowded audiences and to excite the greatest interest in this town and neighbourhood. He publicly declares that he is a *Deist*, that he knows nothing of Jesus Christ being the son of God, that he knows nothing of the Holy Ghost, and positively declares there is no such a place as a hell of brimstone and fire. He breathes and preaches the doctrines of the immortal Paine, and his sermons or lectures have such a tendency to moralize the present demoralized state of society, that few can go and hear him, and not admire him. We cannot speak too highly of him for the good that he is doing; for my own part, whenever I hear him, there is a pleasing sensation thrills through my whole frame, which my pen cannot describe—the reason is, because his sentiments are congenial with my own. You may have some idea what he is doing when I inform you, that the Methodists and Calvinists have begun to preach two or three times a week close by his chapel, in order, as they say, to counteract the poisonous doctrines which he sets forth. The Rev. George Ryan is to preach this evening, and I am going to hear him.

Trade still continues to be very bad here; thousands out of employ, and it is the general opinion that the times will never mend under this system. I have been out of employ nineteen weeks, and we are six of a family. You can scarcely form an idea of the distress that prevails here.

Note by R. C.—Though sorry to hear of the distress in that neighbourhood, I rejoice to hear of such a preacher as Mr. Detrosier. He must be the provincial “Orator of the Christian Evidence Society.” I hope to visit Lancashire in September, and to shake hands with Mr. Detrosier.

NOTICE.

WE have not been able to get the carpenters out of the shop at 62, so as to open it this week; but it will be opened in the early part of the next week. The same circumstance has thrown me back with this Number of “The Republican” and has been an interruption to the labour which I had intended to bestow on this week's address to the public. I intended to have been a little more prolix, though I do not see that I could have said more than I have said. I am but an indifferent hand to write by measure, and the necessity is in itself a bad one.

R. C.

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